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T S2/FULL/1

2/19/1 (Item 1 from file: 636)

DIALOG(R) File 636:Gale Group Newsletter DB(TM)

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JOINING TELEVISION AND THE INTERNET USING JAVA

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Another solution is in the works that could help hasten the convergence between the Internet and television. Consumers may begin using the software-based solution as early as this fall to click on web pages while they watch television on their PCs or after viewing TV programs.

The solution, called HyperTV, is the brainchild of ACTV Inc. and EarthWeb LLC. HyperTV is a Java-based application that will allow broadcasters to stream lists of URLs or other content directly to consumers' computers in real time. This means that as a consumer is watching a program, the nightly news, for example, the broadcaster can send a steady stream of URLs to the consumer during the broadcast that correspond to the stories being aired. By clicking on the URLs, a user can link to additional content related to items referred to during the broadcast.

Coming Soon

ACTV and EarthWeb plan to deliver the application in the third quarter. The client portion of the solution will be available free to consumers and will work with most browsers, although Netscape Navigator 2.0 is recommended since the technology takes advantage of its frames capabilities to deliver URLs while online viewers are watching broadcasts (via either intercast or internal TV cards). Broadcasters will have to license the server application and will pay fees based on the size of the online audience receiving the URL or data streams.

Unlike intercast, which assumes that users will watch TV on their PCs, HyperTV users don't have to be watching on their PCs to get the URLs. Instead, consumers can connect to the HyperTV web site, receive a stream of URLs (which are cached), and return later to click on the links. Although this could be an expensive option for those that pay for access by the hour, it is easy and inexpensive for those using the increasingly popular flat-rate access services.

Although no specific agreements with broadcasters have yet been reached, Bruce Crowley, president of ACTV Interactive, said the joint venture was talking with "most" of the major broadcast and cable firms.

"We think this is a significant step in the blurring of the lines between the TV and the Internet," said Crowley. "We think that people will really benefit from this technology and the ability to get more information on news, sports, education, entertainment -- it's very interactive and exciting."

"HyperTV is an important new media technology which links broadcasters, web sites and Internet users in real-time through a two-way interactive channel which can be individualized by region or by user," added Nova Spivack, senior vice president for marketing strategy for EarthWeb.

Uncovering Opportunities

Besides offering the obvious advantage of letting broadcasters provide additional information on their shows, the technology also offers other benefits for media firms. For example, local broadcasters could choose to stream local traffic updates, headline news, stock quotes, or other information rather than URLs. This information could succeed in drawing a business audience that normally may not be watching television programming during the day.

Broadcasters also could use the medium to make programs more interactive by including polls. Viewers could use the polls to respond to issues, to vote on story lines, or for "call-in" type applications using e-mail.

The technology also offers significant benefits for advertisers. "Advertising is a huge opportunity," said Crowley. "You can't see a commercial on TV today without seeing a URL. We can stream the URLs to viewers as part of our service. That's a value-add for the advertiser, and it could be an important revenue stream for the broadcaster."

It also could open a new kind of advertising model -- one based on transactions. For example, a radio station may broadcast -- via the Net -- its musical content. Using HyperTV (which also works with audio-only broadcasts), the station could broadcast the URL of the band and a message about ordering music CDs, t-shirts, concert tickets, or other related items. Advertisers could pay fees based on the number of sales they make from their web sites, explains Crowley.

"The possibilities of this medium are limited only by the imagination," he added. "There are probably more applications that we haven't thought of yet."

Developing HyperTV

HyperTV primarily will be targeted at the consumer and small/home office market, although larger companies may also be potential customers, said Allison Fishman, marketing and industry relations manager for EarthWeb.

"We see HyperTV as a new medium, although it also represents a convergence between two mediums -- the TV and the Internet," said Fishman.

The development work on HyperTV began about four months ago, although the budding relationship between EarthWeb and ACTV began several months earlier. "We met ACTV at an industry event in New York and there was an almost instant synergy and good feeling between the groups," said Fishman. "We knew we wanted to work together. The ah-ha came later when we began to discuss HyperTV. It is a very elegant and simple solution that promises to be very strong."

Intercast Moves Forward

In the meantime, the Intericast Industry Group is still hard at work developing its technology. Intericast is a hardware and software solution that joins television and the Internet on a consumer's computer. Intel Corp. is creating a board and software combo that enables the technology. The board includes a graphics controller and television tuner, which allows users to view broadcast television programs on their PCs. Web pages will be broadcast using the vertical blanking interval (VBI) standard, which is currently used to deliver closed captioning.

As envisioned, the pages will contain information that broadcasters believe consumers want. To get more information on a topic, users will be able to click links embedded in the broadcast pages. Intericast software automatically will trigger the computer to dial-up the user's access provider and launch his or her web browser.

Intericast Industry Group members believe that the medium has the potential to significantly change television viewing -- and advertising.

Intel expects to begin shipping the board/software duo -- which will be embedded in most new PCs -- this summer.

The industry group is comprised of more than 20 media, cable, software development, content, PC manufacturing, and technology firms.

For more information on HyperTV, contact ACTV at (212) 262-2570 or EarthWeb at (212) 725-6550. For information on intercast, visit the Intericast Industry web site at <http://www.intercast.org/>.

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S4	393	S3 AND DIGITAL
S5	187	CONTACT(W) INFORMATION (W5) TELEVISION
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S2	20	S1 AND SEARCH? AND MESSAGE
S3	20	RD (unique items)
S4	8	S3 AND DIGITAL
S5	4	CONTACT(W) INFORMATION (W5) TELEVISION
S6	0	ADVERTISEMENT (W3) CONTACT (W) INFORMATION
S7	0	RD (unique items)
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1	1	"720114"	EPO	2004/01/13 10:07
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